

Free early years entitlement for three and four year olds Parental contract guidance notes

Note to settings, you should ensure parents understand the information in these guidance notes and where necessary should explain these verbally to them.

To parents

In consideration of your entry into this parent contract your child will receive up to 15 hours per week of free early years provision (the free entitlement) for up to 38 weeks per year at the setting(s) of your choice. Please note some settings may be able to offer this time spread over more than 38 weeks, if you are interested in this please ask the setting for information.

Important note

The purpose of the parent contract is to make sure that:

- a) your child is not funded for more than 15 hours per week or for more than 38 weeks per year: This equates to a maximum of 570 hours in total per year
- b) the setting can make the right claim for funding
- c) you commit to the hours and pattern of access noted on this form at the setting(s) of your choice for at least one term. If you change setting part way through the term you will not be able to claim your free entitlement funding and you may incur a charge at the new setting unless you have received the express permission of the setting(s) identified on the declaration and the local authority, which will only normally be granted where there are exceptional reasons for the change.

Examples of acceptable exceptional reasons may be:

- if your family leaves the area and the setting is no longer accessible where the setting is no longer accessible or providing you with the childcare
- to accommodate a change in shift patterns or relocation in your work or a new job
- suspension of the setting's Ofsted registration or termination of their contract with the local authority to provide the free early years entitlement
- if your child's circumstances change on the recommendation of a professional (health visitor, family support worker, social worker, doctor) working with the child or family
- your setting agrees that your contract can be ended or altered part way through the term
- if you are not able to access your child's agreed free entitlement hours with this setting because they fail to provide it

If you change setting part way through the term and it is not for one of the listed exceptional reasons in the box above (or for another reason which in the opinion of the local authority can be classed as exceptional) you will not be able to receive your 15 hours per week for free and will have to pay for your child to attend the new setting until the start of the next term or keep your child at home until the next term.

How we use your information

The information you give in the contract will be retained by your setting(s) and Cheshire West and Chester council. The setting(s) hold information on children in order to support their development, monitor their progress, to provide appropriate pastoral care, and to assess how well the setting as a whole is doing. This information includes contact details, attendance information, characteristics such as ethnic group, special educational needs and any relevant medical information. From time to time early years settings are required to pass on some of this data to local authorities, the Department for Education (DfE) and to agencies that are prescribed by law, such as Ofsted.

This information will be used to contact you about Cheshire West and Chester council services and about services provided by our children's centre delivery partners. It may also be used to contact you about research on children's services. In accordance with the data protection act (1988), Cheshire West and Chester council will hold all data securely and treat it confidentially.

The local authority uses information about children for whom it provides services to carry out specific functions for which it is responsible. For example, the local authority will make an assessment of any special educational needs your child may have. It also uses the information to derive statistics to inform various decisions. The statistics are used in such a way that individual children cannot be identified from them.

Child details

Please ensure you complete all details in this section. You should use the child's legal name as shown on their birth certificate. Settings and the council will be entitled to request sight of your child's birth certificate as proof of your child's age and eligibility to claim the free entitlement. Ethnicity codes are listed below. If you do not want the ethnic origin of your child to be known please enter the code REFU.

Ethnicity codes

Code	Description
WBRI	White British
WIRI	White Irish
WIRT	Traveller of Irish heritage
WROM	Gypsy/ Roma
WOTH	White, any other white background
MWBC	Mixed, white and black Caribbean
MWBA	Mixed, white and black African
MWAS	Mixed, white and Asian
MOTH	Any other mixed background
AIND	Asian or Asian British Indian
APKN	Asian or Asian British Pakistani
ABAN	Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi
AOTH	Any other Asian background
BCRB	Black or black British Caribbean
BAFR	Black or black British African

BOTH	Any other black background
CHNE	Chinese
OOTH	Any other ethnic background
REFU	Did not wish to be recorded
NOBT	Not obtained

The council and provider need to know if your child has any special educational needs which may affect the level of funding your child receives. Please enter the appropriate code on the contract where indicated.

SEN codes

Code	Description
N	No special educational needs
A	school action or early years action
P	school action plus or early years action plus
S	statement of SEN

When can my child start their free entitlement?

Your child is eligible for the free entitlement shortly after their third birthday which has the following effect:

- a child born between 1 January and 31 March will become eligible at the start of the summer term.
- a child born between 1 April and 31 August will become eligible at the start of the autumn term
- a child born between 1 September to 31 December will become eligible at the start of the spring term.

Parent/ guardian/ carer information

This should include the details of every person with legal parental responsibility for the child although the contract only needs to be signed by one person with legal parental responsibility. You can find guidance on who has legal responsibility for a child at http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/ParentsRights/DG_4002954

Information as to setting(s), hours and patterns of access

Your child is able to have up to 15 hours of free early years provision per week, for 38 weeks per year commencing the term after their third birthday, if your child is attending a nursery, pre-school playgroup or independent school (a setting) which is on the council's register. How you claim this time is something that you will agree with the setting as they may provide it in different ways.

You are able to claim 15 hours per week by either:

- claiming all 15 hours with one council school or nursery unit for the whole term
- claiming all 15 hours with one private day nursery, one independent school or one pre-school; or dividing the hours between different settings e.g. seven and a half hours with a private day nursery and seven and a half hours with another private day nursery or maintained nursery.

You can claim the free entitlement at up to two settings, but you are only allowed to claim a maximum of fifteen hours per week in total. If you have already claimed all 15 hours at one setting you cannot claim any at another setting. If you are claiming your free entitlement at more than one setting you will need to sign a separate contract with each setting and identify them both on each contract.

Setting hours - Enter the weekly hours to be claimed at the setting/s, then enter the total hours attended (include hours which make up the free entitlement and any additional hours you pay for) in the table.

Your free entitlement must be delivered by the setting in sessions of a minimum of two and a half hours and a maximum of ten hours in length and be taken by you in hourly or half hourly units.

Your full 15 hours of free entitlement can only be taken over a minimum of two days. You can claim no more than ten hours in a single day. Some settings may offer a stretched free entitlement over more than 38 weeks, in which case the total number of hours that can be taken per week will be reduced proportionately.

Signing the contract

You must read these conditions carefully and then tick the boxes on the contract to confirm that you understand the terms of the free entitlement, insert the required information as set out above and then sign and date the contract where indicated. If you have any queries or require further information you may want to contact the Family Information Service or ask your childcare provider for a copy of the factsheet entitled early years foundation stage grant, series three, factsheet three.

Family Information Service, Telephone: 0800 0852863

Email: fis.west@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Web: www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/familyinformationservice